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talents would have done. But with all the imperfections of my own efforts, I hope that I have shown that there were solid grounds on which to rest his exposition of the constitution."—p. 350.

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ART. VIII. — *Tales from the German*. Translated by NATHANIEL GREENE. Boston; American Stationers' Company. 1837. 2 vols. 12mo. pp. 355 and 352.

THIS is the unpretending title of a work, given to the public by one of our own townsmen, a few weeks since. Though styled by the translator "*Tales*," they might well be called *Novels*, or *Romances*; for the first of the series occupies a whole volume, of as portly dimensions as would suffice for a brace of Bulwer's or D'Israeli's manufacture. Of the numerous contributions to the stores of fiction, with which the press has teemed of late, we have met with none more to our taste than this, or which is calculated to excite a livelier interest in the reader; a merit which must be shared between the author and the translator. It is a higher effort to translate well a work of fiction, especially one abounding in colloquial dialogue and local allusions, than a work of sober science, where the terms readily find corresponding equivalents in our own language. The translator of fiction has the difficult task, if he would maintain the interest of his original, of clothing all the peculiar sentiments and images of a foreign nation in the familiar diction of his own. If he fail in the former particular, the work loses its originality and truth; if in the latter, it will have a forced and formal air, fatal to interest. In whichever way he fails, the flavor of the original, like a fine essence imprisoned in a foul vase, will be spoiled.

A translation, skilfully executed, has, to a certain extent, as far as the public is concerned, a superiority over a native composition; since it makes us acquainted with the peculiarities of the nation to which the original belongs, more intimately and faithfully, than could be obtained from any similar production of our own. It is in literature, what a sensible foreigner who speaks our language fluently is in society, the very best source of information respecting the manners and usages of his own country.

Among the fruits, and the evidences, of that wider attention to the literatures of other countries, which distinguishes the present day, is the translation, both here and in England, of many of the most popular foreign authors. None of the English writers have done the public better service in this way than Mr. Thomas Roscoe, who has selected with taste, and translated with considerable skill, some of the most interesting fictions of the Spanish, Italian, and German Novelists. From the latter he has made very liberal selections, from the old times of "Reynard the Fox" down to the writings of Tieck and Langbein, our own contemporaries. In this list, however, we find none of the compositions of Van der Velde, one of the most agreeable and popular authors of the present century; — we might have added, in any other country than that where the writers seem to think in quartos, one of the most voluminous. His works, published at Dresden in 1824, the year of his death, amount to five and twenty volumes. A Life of the Author is incorporated in this edition. A briefer notice of him and his labors, is inserted in the German "Conversations-Lexicon," which, as it was too long for translation in the American edition of that work, we will give to our readers here. We recommend to Mr. Greene, to prefix to a subsequent edition of his book, a biographical sketch of his author, whose writings cannot be perused without exciting a natural desire to become acquainted with something of his personal history.

"Francis Charles Van der Velde was born at Breslau in 1779, and was educated there, at the Magdalen and Frederick schools. In his thirteenth year he lost his father, who had an office in the Chamber of Stamps at Berlin. In 1797, and the following year, he studied law at Frankfort on the Oder. He afterwards held several offices connected with the administration of justice, at Breslau, Winzig, and Zobten. He died at Breslau on the 6th of April, 1824. Between 1809 and 1814, he published various poems and tales in the journals, and wrote several pieces for the theatre, one of which is 'The Bohemian Amazons.' He finally devoted himself entirely to novel-writing. His larger tales began to appear in 1817; and he became the favorite of the reading world. His first series of tales is 'The Minerals,' in three volumes. Then followed 'Prince Frederick,' 'The Conquest of Mexico,' 'The Maltese,' 'The Lichtensteiner,' 'The Anabaptists,' 'The Patricians,' 'Arwed Gyllenstierna,' 'The Wish of Kanku,' 'The Theatre of Lovers,' 'The Bohemian

Maidens' War,' 'The Horoscope,' 'Christina and her Court,' and 'The Embassy to China.' Van der Velde has been called, but improperly, the German Walter Scott; for in Scott's stories the romance is subsidiary, in Van der Velde's it is the main object. Scott's scenes are intended to illustrate certain historical periods. Van der Velde throws an historical air over his novels, only to give more interest to his characters and story. He has drawn fully half his materials from other than German sources. The scene is sometimes on the borders of Norway, sometimes in Mexico, sometimes in Corsica, at the Cape, in China; and he is skilful in preserving the local coloring, in bodying forth the style of thought and action belonging to the times and places selected, and in giving individuality to his characters."

The application of the name of Walter Scott may seem somewhat overstrained; as, indeed, to whom could it be applied without appearing so? The German Novelist, however, must be admitted to show great variety, and much truth and spirit, in his draughts of character, especially of those of his own countrymen, the subjects of his more intimate observation. He abounds in fine touches of pathos, which go direct to the heart; and if he sometimes, with somewhat of a national failing, oversteps the precise limits of probability, or of good taste, he has given a sombre and terrible coloring to some of his scenes, which takes powerful hold on the imagination. The stories which Mr. Greene has selected for his purpose are, "Arwed Gyllenstierna," taking up a whole volume, "The Lichtensteins," "The Anabaptist," (which the translator has substituted for the plural in the original,) and "The Sorceress." The scene of the first of these is laid at the period of Charles the Twelfth's death. We have spirited portraits of the Swedish monarch, of Ulrica, his ambitious successor, and of the celebrated Baron Swedenborg. But the chief interest of the romance is derived from the character of Arwed, a bold and precipitate young cavalier, whose chivalrous virtues are brought into strong contrast with the cold and prudent policy of the old counsellor, his father. Then we have another interest excited in the persons of two beautiful women; one the heroine, a sort of Flora MacIvor in her way, and the other a counterpart of Di Vernon, with a more liberal dash of the Amazon in her composition,—a lady, in short, who rides with pistols at her saddle-bow, and refreshes herself with a bear hunt before breakfast. The story is enlivened with many touches of feudal grandeur and hos-

pitality, and many stirring incidents, which keep a keen interest awake in the reader. We quote the following extract, giving a slight sketch of the celebrated Charles the Twelfth, whose name is as familiar to the English reader as any of the line of British monarchs.

“ ‘Arwed followed the general. The door of the royal chamber at that moment opened. A man was standing by a table, upon which were lying a Bible, a map of Norway, and a plan of Frederickshall. His blue, unornamented riding-coat, with large brass buttons, his narrow black neck stock, his thin locks, which bristled in every direction, the broad, yellow, leather shoulder-band, from which his long sword depended, and his large cavalry boots, would have led to the conclusion that he was a subaltern officer, — but his tall, noble figure, his beautiful forehead, his large, soft, blue eyes, and his well-formed nose, gave to his whole appearance something so majestic, and so highly distinguished him from two embroidered, starred, and ribboned lords who were with him in the room, that Arwed instantly recognised his hitherto unknown king.

“ ‘The trenches opened on the fourth,’ said the king, fretfully tracing upon the plan with his finger. ‘They ought to be further advanced!’

“ ‘Certainly, your majesty!’ answered Arwed’s protector, in a sad tone. ‘One feels tempted to believe that he who conducts these works either cannot or will not advance them, and it must be conceded that colonel Megret understands his business.’

“ ‘I know what you would say, Duecker,’ said Charles, with a severe countenance. ‘But I will give you a useful lesson. You must not speak ill of any one when you are speaking with your king.’

“ ‘Making an effort to suppress his feelings, and followed by the scornful smile of the eldest prince, Duecker retired, — whilst the other, a youth of about Arwed’s age, amused himself with examining the new comer with a far from becoming hauteur.

“ ‘The king, following the glance of his nephew, perceived Arwed, and advanced towards him.

“ ‘Who?’ asked he, with some embarrassment.

“ ‘Gyllenstierna,’ answered Arwed, with a profound inclination; ‘a Swedish nobleman, who begs of your majesty that he may be permitted to fight under your banners.’

“ ‘Count Gyllenstierna?’ inquired Charles, leaning on his giant sword. ‘The father is a determined opponent of my administration!’ said he to his brother-in-law, as Arwed bowed affirmatively, and a convulsive smile distorted the lips of his well-formed mouth.

"Yet full of devotion for his king and his native land!" earnestly interposed Arwed, "if your majesty will but permit his son to prove it."

"The king gave him a complacent look. 'I am now about to take the battery called the Golden Lion from the Danes,' said he; 'you can remain by my side.'"

"Heaven reward your majesty!" cried Arwed, in ecstasies, and seized the hand of the hero to kiss it.

"I like not that," said the king, hastily withdrawing his hand, — and at that moment adjutant-general Siquier, a slender Frenchman, with a cunning but wasted face, entered the room.

"Every thing is in readiness for the attack, your majesty!" announced he.

"God with us, comrades!" exclaimed the king, putting on his immense gauntlets of yellow leather.

"This attack will cost many men!" said Duecker, in an under-tone to the young duke.

"O!" whispered Siquier, who overheard the remark, "a great French general, under whom I once served, was accustomed to say before the slaughter, 'If God will but remain neutral to-day, then shall these Messieurs be finely flogged.'"

"The king, who was already at the door, once more returned. 'Your great general,' said he to Siquier, — indignant at the quotation of the irreverent speech, — 'spoke then like a great fool!'

"With a countenance which badly concealed his rage at this unexpected reproof, Siquier cast down his eyes, and the warriors silently followed their heroic leader." — pp. 27–29.

Of all the tales, "*The Lichtensteins*" is, on the whole, most to our taste. At least, with some blemishes of extravagance, it affords the most lovely and engaging pictures of the national character. It is a tale of the *Thirty Years' War*, in the early part of the seventeenth century; and among the victims of military oppression in that lawless period, the author has depicted the character of a German woman of the middling class in society, Katharine Tessel, who displays such purity and heroic constancy, softened by so much feminine sweetness, and by such a frank and amiable simplicity, truly national, as makes one sigh it should be all a dream. But we refer the reader to the work itself; for it is as fruitless to attempt giving an idea, by mere description, of a spirited portraiture in fiction, as in painting.

We have but a few remarks to add, respecting the execution of the translation. It is made with uncommon beauty and spirit, the diction fluent, the dialogue natural, and, as far

as we have compared it with the original, the version is eminently faithful. When the translator has deviated, it has generally been by omission, in the desire to present nothing offensive to the American reader. We have particularly noticed this in the story of "The Anabaptist," where the process of purification has been carried on by Mr. Greene with a bold hand, with decided advantage to the morals, and, we may add, without detriment to the interest of the story. The continental writers indulge unrebuked in much greater license in their works of imagination, than is conceded by our own severer standard of morals; although the modern effusions in our language, under the auspices of Bulwer & Co., are fast familiarizing us with models, whose influence may break down this honorable line of demarkation between us. It is a proof of good taste, to say nothing of better motives, in Mr. Greene, that he has carefully softened down, or, where he could not do that, has expunged, such few exceptionable passages as occur in his author. In this way, if his work lose some of its attraction for a morbid imagination, it will gain infinitely more with a higher and better class of readers, and will probably have a wider circulation; since it is thus qualified to form a most pleasing and elegant entertainment of the domestic circle. As such we cordially recommend it. Mr. Greene has been favorably known by his previous translation of Sforzosi's Italian History, for Messrs. Harper's Edition of the Family Library. We hope he will find leisure to continue his literary pursuits, and that, since he has the power, he will also have the inclination, to enrich his native literature by transplanting such beautiful exotics into it, as the "Tales from the German."

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ART. IX. — *Antiquitates Americanæ, sive Scriptores Septentrionales Rerum Ante-Columbianarum, in America. Samling af de i Nordens Oldskrifter in deholdte efterretninger om de gamle Nordboers opdagelsereiser til America, fra det 10de til det 14de Aarhundrede.*  
 Edidit Societas Regia Antiquariorum Septentrionalium.  
 Hafniæ, 1837. 4to. pp. 479.

THIS is a work of great interest. It has long been expected with impatience. Its editor, Mr. C. C. Rafn, is entitled